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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RPO DUBAI 000341

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SUBJECT: IRAN: AHMADINEJAD NAMES ADDITIONAL CABINET MEMBERS

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REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ahmadinejad delivered the names of 18 of his 21 proposed cabinet ministers to the Majlis today. The remaining three—for the ministries of defense, commerce, and justice—had not yet been finalized, although legally today is the deadline for such a submission. Of note, the incumbent Foreign Affairs Minister, Manuchehr Mottaki, was nominated to retain his post, Ahmadinejad nominated a third female to the cabinet, and the Defense Minister Mostafa Mohammad Najjar has been nominated for the Interior Ministry. It is expected that many of Ahmadinejad's picks will undergo a thorough if not brutal examination by the Majlis if for no other reason than the fact that, in contrast to previous administrations, the President made no effort to consult with the Majlis on his selections. The background for selected Ministerial nominees follows.

[1](#)2. (U) Foreign Affairs: Manuchehr Mottaki. Mottaki has served in this position since 2005. There was speculation that Ahmadinejad would replace Mottaki with his ally, current head of the Supreme Council for National Security Saeed Jalili. Mottaki has been criticized during his tenure for being weak and ineffective. He is a career diplomat.

[1](#)3. (U) Interior: Mostafa Mohammad Najjar. Najjar has served as the Minister of Defense since 2005. He has served in the IRGC in a variety of positions since 1979.

[1](#)4. (C) Intelligence: Hojjatoleslam Heydar Moslehi. Ahmadinejad announced this appointment on Sunday. (NOTE: One IRPO contact, a former high ranking IRGC officer who knew Moslehi when the latter worked as the Supreme Leader's representative to the IRGC ground forces was surprised at Moslehi's appointment, saying that Moslehi did not have much of an intelligence background. He characterized Moslehi as 'soft spoken' and 'rational', at least in relation to many of the IRGC intelligence officers who play an increasing role in the government.)

[1](#)5. (U) Islamic Culture and Guidance: Seyyed Mohammad Hoseyni.

Hoseyni is a professor of theology at Tehran University, executive deputy at IRIB, and served in the Majlis from 1996-2000.

¶6. (U) Economic Affairs and Finance: Shamseddin Hoseyni. Hoseyni is the incumbent at the ministry, serving there since 2008. He received 218 votes last year, suggesting his re-confirmation is likely. He is a critic of Iran's subsidy system and will presumably work with Ahmadinejad for its reform.

¶7. (U) Oil: Seyyed Masud Mirkazemi. Mirkazemi was the Commerce Minister during Ahmadinejad's first term. High inflation prompted some calls for his impeachment in May 2008, though he remained in office. A biography published on Ahmadinejad's website in 2007 shows little background in the oil industry; prior to becoming Commerce Minister, he served in various positions in the Defense Ministry. He has a Phd in industrial engineering.

¶8. (U) Energy: Mohammad Ali-Abadi. Ali-Abadi served as the Vice President for Physical Education during Ahmadinejad's first term and also headed Iran's Olympic Committee. He came under criticism for politicizing Iranian sports. He was a deputy at the Tehran Municipality during Ahmadinejad's time as mayor. He has a Master's degree in architecture.

¶9. (U) Education: Susan Keshavarz. Keshavarz is the third female Ahmadinejad has nominated to his cabinet. Keshavarz joined the Education Ministry in 2008 as a deputy, heading the Special Education Organization. She was previously a professor of philosophy. A Majles deputy criticized her prospective nomination because she lacks executive experience.

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¶10. (C) Comment: The cabinet nominees include incumbents, those having served elsewhere in Ahmadinejad's first term, and new faces. As expected, some of Ahmadinejad's selections seem to lack experience in their designated posts. Prior to the cabinet announcement there had been extensive grumblings among Majlis deputies (and other political elites) that Ahmadinejad had failed to consult them on his selections, setting up a contentious battle for some of his nominations. IRPO will follow-up with a more comprehensive assessment of the nominees.
EYRE